

### Opening Statement (John Mansfield Newson)

Good morning Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor, Senator Kissel, Representative O'Neill, Members of the Judiciary Committee.

My name is John Mansfield Newson. It is an honor and a privilege to appear before you today. I want to thank the Governor, M. Jodi Rell for having the confidence in me as an individual, my background and character to nominate me to become a Judge of the Superior Court Judge. I also would like to thank the individual members of this Committee for considering my nomination.

By way of background, I was raised in Norwich, Connecticut, and attended high school at the Norwich Free Academy. Upon graduating from the Norwich Free Academy in 1987, I accepted a full football scholarship to attend the University of Rhode Island, earning my Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1992. I entered the Western New England College School of Law that fall, and was awarded my Juris Doctor degree in 1995.

After graduating from law school, I was awarded one of twelve one-year clerkships positions with the Connecticut Department of Legal Research, which provides research clerks to the Judges in the Superior Courts. After training, I was assigned to the judges sitting within the New London Judicial District, where I was proud to have authored approximately sixty (60) memoranda of law and draft opinions involving a variety of criminal, civil, family and administrative law matters during my one year assignment.

Following the completion of my clerkship, I was hired as an attorney by the Connecticut Division of Public Defender Services. My first assignment was in the New Haven Juvenile Court, where I represented juveniles charged with crimes in all aspects of the juvenile delinquency system from detention hearing (arraignment) through disposition and or trial. After several years in the juvenile system, I applied for, and was granted, a transfer to work in the Public Defender's Office in the Manchester Superior Court. In Manchester, I represented adults charged with a variety of misdemeanor and felony charges from their initial presentation through disposition and/or trial.

After five years with the Division of Public Defender Services, I left to open The Newson Law Firm, LLC in October 2001, a general solo law firm, in my hometown of Norwich. Over the course of the time I was in private practice I focused mainly on consumer debt collection, criminal defense in the GA (misdemeanor and low felony) and Part A (serious felony) courts matters, and acting as guardian ad litem (GAL) and/or attorney for minor children (AFMC) in divorce/custody matters, but I also provided legal services to clients in a variety of other areas of the law, including custody litigation, commercial and residential real estate transactions, probate matters, landlord-tenant litigation, juvenile delinquency and juvenile child protection, personal injury, general plaintiff's and defendant's civil litigation, worker's compensation, and drafting of leases, mortgages, contracts and other legal documents. I have handled criminal matters in approximately 11 of our State's criminal courts, and have tried cases as sole counsel in both the GA and Part A courts. I have also participated in numerous custody trials as either GAL or AFMC, including several sent to the Child Protection Session at Middletown.

In May of this year, based purely on my desire to spend more "real" free time with my wife and young children, I made the difficult decision close The Newson Law Firm, LLC and accepted an appointment to my present position with the Division of Public Defender Services at the Danielson GA/Windham JD courthouse.

During my career, I have also made great effort to give back to the community that supported me so well growing up. I served two terms on the Norwich City Council, being elected as *president pro tempore* by my colleagues in my second term. I also served on the Board of Directors of the New London County Bar Association, was a member of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship Fund of New London, which awarded 5 \$20,000 scholarships annually to minority students from New London County, and served as community member on the Norwich Free Academy's Parents of Students of Color Group and Athletic Diversity Committee, to name a few.

At the present time, I live in Brooklyn with my wife, Lynne and the two joys of our lives, our 5½ year old daughter Alyssa and 3½ year old son Reese. My wife and mother, Delores, are here with me today to support me, and I would like to say how fortunate I am to have two such terrific and supportive women in my life. Thank you for being here to support me.

In closing, I am grateful for the opportunity to be considered for a position as a Superior Court Judge. I believe that course of my practice has been varied, which has provided me the opportunity to have gained experience across a broad spectrum of areas of the law. I continue to learn new things to this day, and I hope and am sure that I will continue to learn new things about the law every day going forward. I assure you that, if I am confirmed by this Committee, I will strive each day to serve the people of Connecticut with compassion, even-handedness and intelligence.

Thank you for your time today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have regarding my qualifications.